

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3298

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUANDA 0234

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV AO

SUBJECT: CABINDA PROSPECTS FOR SEPARATE INDEPENDENCE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. ALTHOUGH THE CABINDAN PROBLEM CONTAINS IMPORTANT FACTORS EXTERNAL TO ANGOLA, NOTABLY ZAIRE'S INTEREST IN WHO CONTROLS CABINDA AND ITS OIL RESERVES AND THE CABINDAN PEOPLES' DESIRE FOR INDEPENDENCE FROM ANGOLA, FUTURE INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS HERE ARE FATED TO HAVE THE MAJOR EFFECT ON THE ENCLAVE'S FUTURE. IF THE PRESENT ANGOLAN POWER STRUGGLE DEGENERATES INTO PROTRACTED CIVIL WAR, THE WAY IS OPEN FOR EITHER CABINDAN INDEPENDENCE, ZAIRIAN ANNEXATION, OR POSSIBLY A HYBRID OF THE TWO. IF CIVIL WAR DOES NOT ENSUE AND MPLA WINS THE ANGOLAN LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE, ZAIRE'S FREEDOM TO INTERVENE IS INCREASED, WHILE A MORE LIKELY FNLA/UNITA VICTORY WOULD PRESUMABLY REDUCE ZAIRE'S OPTIONS SIGNIFICANTLY AND TEND TOWARD, BUT NO GUARANTEE, PERMANENT ANGOLAN INCORPORATION OF CABINDA. END SUMMARY

2. THE SOLE QUESTION ON WHICH ANGOLA'S THREE LIBERATION GROUPS, AS WELL AS EVEN THE MOST REACTIONARY WHITES HERE, WHOLLY AND ENTHUSIASTICALLY AGREE IS THAT OIL-RICH CABINDA IS AND SHOULD REMAIN PART OF ANGOLA. WHILE THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT MANY, IF NOT MOST, CABINDANS WANT INDEPENDENCE, THERE IS EQUALLY LITTLE CHANCE THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO WAGE A SUCCESSFUL GUERRILLA WAR AGAINST WHAT THEY REGARD AS ANGOLAN NEO-COLONIALISM ONCE AN
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ANGOLAN ARMY IS IN EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF CABINDA. CABINDAN CHANCES

FOR INDEPENDENCE APPEAR WHOLLY DEPENDENT ON CIVIL WAR IN ANGOLA. CIVIL WAR HERE WOULD NOT ONLY DELAY THE ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT'S STEPS TOWARD EFFECTIVE MILITARY CONTROL OF CABINDA, BUT WOULD ALSO PRESENT MOBUTU WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE CONTROL OF CABINDA EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY THROUGH FLEC, THE CABINDAN LIBERATION FRONT.

3. IN THE EVENT OF DRAWN OUT CIVIL STRIFE HERE, MPLA WILL NEED ALL ITS MILITARY POWER IN ANGOLA PROPER, LEAVING NONE AVAILABLE TO HOLD CABINDA. FNLA, WITH AS YET NO ARMED PRESENCE IN CABINDA, WOULD IF HARD PRESSED HERE, PROBABLY NOT MOVE TROOPS FROM ZAIRE INTO THE ENCLAVE BUT INSTEAD SEND THEM HERE. IF NOT HARD PRESSED, FNLA COULD EASILY OCCUPY CABINDA PROVIDED IT HAS MOBUTU'S CONCURRENCE. WHILE WE ARE IN NO POSITION TO KNOW MOBUTU'S PRESENT FEELINGS, IT IS POSSIBLY SIGNIFICANT THAT FNLA HAS NEVER HAD TROOPS IN CABINDA, SOMETHING IT COULD EASILY HAVE DONE IF MOBUTU HAD NO OBJECTION.

4. IF THE PORTUGUESE ARMY PULLS OUT AND THE ANGOLAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS ARE AT WAR, THE CABINDANS COULD GAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE AT LEAST TEMPORARILY BY DEFAULT. IF THAT HAPPENS IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR THE ULTIMATE WINNER HERE TO LATER RE-OCCUPY CABINDA, AND PERHAPS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT ZAIRE'S COOPERATION. FOR AN ANGOLAN REOCCUPATION ATTEMPT, TRANSIT THROUGH ZAIRE IS CRITICAL SINCE ACCESS BY AIR CAN BE DENIED BY BLOCKING OR DESTROYING CABINDA'S ONE HARD SURFACE AIRPORT; BY SEA, BY PLACING A MODEST FORCE WITH LIGHT ARTILLERY OVERLOOKING CABINDA'S PORT. IF FNLA TRIUMPHS IN THE POWER STRUGGLE HERE AND TURNS ITS ATTENTION TO SECURING CABINDA, ZAIRE WILL THEN HAVE TO WEIGH THE VALUE OF FUTURE ANGOLAN GOODWILL AGAINST BOTH ITS DESIRE THAT ANGOLA NOT STRADDLE ITS SEA ACCESS AND ITS POSSIBLE DESIGNS ON CABINDAN OIL. IN THE LESS LIKELY EVENT OF AN MPLA VICTORY THERE IS SCANT POSSIBILITY AN MPLA ARMY WOULD BE ALLOWED TRANSIT PRIVILEGES THROUGH ZAIRE. ENTRY VIA THE CONGO MIGHT LIKewise BE UNACCEPTABLE TO ZAIRE. THEREFORE ALMOST CERTAINLY AN MPLA VICTORY, AND POSSIBLY EVEN AN FNLA ONE, WOULD LEAVE CABINDA INDEPENDENT, ANNEXED BY ZAIRE OR SOME COMBINATION OF THE TWO.

5. IN SUM, THERE APPEAR TO BE FOUR REQUISITES FOR ANGOLAN CONTROL OF CABINDA: A) THE EXISTENCE OF AN INTEGRATED AND REASONABLY

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EFFECTIVE ANGOLAN ARMY; B) ITS TRANSPORT TO CABINDA BEFORE THE CABINDANS ARE IN A POSITION TO RESIST; C) NO PORTUGUESE ARMY WITHDRAWAL UNTIL THE ANGOLANS ARE IN PLACE; AND D) THE COOPERATION, OR AT A MINIMUM THE ACQUIESCENCE OF THE ZAIRE GOVERNMENT. IF ONE OR MORE OF THESE CONDITIONS ARE NOT MET, THE CABINDA ADVENTURE MAY YET BEGIN IN EARNEST.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUANDA 0234

6. WHETHER OR NOT THE CABINDANS SUCCEED IN ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE, THE ATTEMPT, IF SERIOUSLY MADE, WILL GREATLY AFFECT ZAIRE'S FUTURE RELATIONS WITH ANGOLA, AS WELL AS OUR DEALINGS WITH BOTH COUNTRIES. ZAIRE, WHICH NOW SUPPORTS BOTH FNLA AND FLEC, WILL HAVE TO MAKE A CHOICE. IF MPLA LED BY NETO RULES ANGOLA, THE CHOICE COULD QUITE POSSIBLY BE FLEC. THIS ASSUMES THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN A NETO-LED ANGOLA AND ZAIRE WOULD BE HOSTILE AT BEST. IN THAT SITUATION OPTING TO ASSIST CABINDAN INDEPENDENCE, (OR GO FOR OUTRIGHT ANNEXATION) OR A PROTECTORATE ARRANGEMENT AT LEAST WOULD CUT ZAIRE'S LOSSES. A FNLA OR FNLA/UNITA VICTORY PRESENTS ZAIRE WITH MORE OF A DILEMMA. SUCH A GOVERNMENT CAN BE ASSUMED TO BE INITIALLY FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARDS ZAIRE AND AN INVOLVEMENT IN A CABINDAN INDEPENDENCE ATTEMPT WOULD LOSE ZAIRE THE USE OF THE BENGUELA RAILROAD AND THE PORT OF LOBITO. MOBUTU WOULD BE FACED WITH A DIFFICULT TRADE-OFF DECISION UNTIL HE GETS AN INTERNAL RAILROAD TO THE COAST.

7. AS FOR THE U.S., OUR DESIRE TO REMAIN FREE OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE CABINDAN MATTER IS HAMPERED BY GULF'S \$300 MILLION INVESTMENT IN THE CONTESTED TERRITORY AND OUR WISH FOR FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH INDEPENDENT ANGOLA. A FURTHER COMPLICATION IN THE PROBABILITY THAT OTHER U.S. OIL COMPANIES (TEXACO, AMOCO, ESSO, SUN, ETC.) WILL DEVELOP PRODUCING FIELDS FROM THEIR PRESENT CONCESSIONS IN ANGOLA PROPER WHICH COULD BE HELD HOSTAGE TO U.S. AND GULF NON-INVOLVEMENT IN THE FATE OF CABINDA. UNFORTUNATELY, EVEN
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TOTALLY ERRONEOUS ACCUSATIONS OF USG INTERVENTION IN CABINDA WILL, IN THE HIGHLY EMOTIONAL CONTEXT THAT WILL THEN EXIST, PLACE THESE OTHER INVESTMENTS IN JEOPARDY. HOWEVER, THE HOSTAGE ROLE OF THOSE INVESTMENTS MAY BE REDUCED OR ELIMINATED IN THE EVENT AN MPLA NETO GOVERNMENT COMES TO POWER HERE SIMPLY BECAUSE WE CAN EXPECT THEIR ULTIMATE NATIONALIZATION WHETHER OR NOT WE OR GULF ARE PROMOTING CABINDAN INDEPENDENCE. THEREFORE, IF MPLA WINS IN ANGOLA, AN UNLIKELY PROSPECT, SUCCESSFUL CABINDAN INDEPENDENCE COULD RESULT IN GULF RETAINING ITS INVESTMENT THERE, PERHAPS ON MORE FAVORABLE TERMS THAN IT NEGOTIATED IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR.

8. HAVING PRESENTED THE ALTERNATIVES IN CABINDA IN THE STARKEST POSSIBLE TERMS, WE SHOULD ADD THAT ALL THREE LIBERATION GROUPS ARE THINKING IN TERMS OF A SPECIAL STATUS FOR CABINDA IN ORDER TO DAMP THE DESIRE FOR INDEPENDENCE. INTELLIGENT MANAGEMENT BY WHOMEVER WINS THE ANGOLAN POWER STRUGGLE SHOULD KEEP THINGS UNDER CONTROL, DESPITE THE TEMPTATION, MOBUTU IS NOT LIKELY IN THE SHORT OR MEDIUM TERM TO ATTEMPT A COUP DE MAIN IN CABINDA.
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